

Message Text

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PAGE 01 REYKJA 00314 041824Z

56

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 DLOS-04 OFA-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15 INT-05 EB-07 OES-05 COME-00 SAL-01

TRSE-00 ACDA-10 /102 W

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P R 041655Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6097

INFO COMICEDEFOR

ICINCLANT

CINCEUR

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USMISSION NATO

UNCLAS REYKJAVIK 0314

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EFIS PFOR MARR IC UK US NATO

SUBJECT: ICELAND-UK FISHERIES DISPUTE: DEFENSE RELATIONSHIP IN
SPOTLIGHT AGAIN

1. FOREIGN MINISTER EINAR AGUSTSSON IS CITED IN LOCAL PRESS
TODAY AS SAYING THAT ICELAND MUST CAREFULLY CONSIDER POSSIBILITY
OF CLOSING KEFLAVIK BASE IF UK FRIGATES ARE NOT PULLED OUT OF
200-MILE FISHING LIMITS. HE ADDED THAT SHUTTING DOWN BASE WOULD
BE PREFERABLE TO WITHDRAWING FROM NATO. FONMIN, WHO STRESSED
HE WAS SPEAKING PERSONALLY AND NOT FOR GOI, DID NOT SET TIME
LIMIT FOR REMOVAL OF WARSHIPS NOR OTHERWISE ELABORATE ON STATE-
MENT. ACCORDING TO LOCAL ACCOUNTS, AGUSTSSON'S REMARKS HAD ORI-
GINALLY BEEN MADE TO INTERVIEWER FROM NORWEGIAN NEWSPAPER
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PAGE 02 REYKJA 00314 041824Z

STAVANGER AFTENBLADET. (MFA PRESS OFFICER CONFIRMED TO EMBOFF

THAT INTERVIEW HAD TAKEN PLACE BUT SAID THAT NO TRANSCRIPT
OR OTHER OFFICIAL RECORD OF IT EXISTED.)

2. LINK BETWEEN DEFENSE AND FISHERIES ISSUES HAS ALSO BECOME
OBJECT OF DEBATE THIS WEEK BETWEEN TWO MAJOR COALITION
PARTY NEWSPAPERS. INDEPENDENCE PARTY'S MORGUNBLADID TOUCHED
OFF DISCUSSION IN MARCH 3 EDITORIAL BY ENDORSING STATEMENT
MADE AT COPENHAGEN NORDIC COUNCIL MEETING BY
SDP EX-CHAIRMAN, GYLFI GISLASON, WHO SAID THAT ICELAND WOULD
NOT WITHDRAW FROM NATO OR HALT DEFENSE COOPERATION WITH US
IN SPITE OF FISHERIES DISPUTE. SAME DAY, PROGRESSIVE PARTY'S
TIMINN POLITICAL COLUMNIST WAS CRITICIZING GISLASON FOR MAKING
SUCH SWEEPING STATEMENTS ABROAD WHEN FACT IS FEW IN ICELAND
LISTEN TO HIM DUE TO HIS SHRINKING INFLUENCE AND THAT OF
HIS PARTY. ARTICLE WENT ON TO SAY THAT WHILE MAJORITY OF
ICELANDERS FAVORS CONTINUED WESTERN DEFENSE COOPERATION,
DEMAND TO TERMINATE IT COULD COME ANY TIME BECAUSE OF DAN-
GEROUS SITUATION ON FISHING GROUNDS. FOLLOWIING DAY,
MORGUNBLADID RESPONDED IN ITS DAILY POLITICAL COUNMN,
ACCUSING TIMINN OF ARROGANCE IN EFFORT TO BELITTLE GISLASON
AND SAYING THAT TACTIC OF TRADING ON DEFENSE RELATIONSHIP
IN FISHERIES DISPUTE, WHICH TIMINN SEEMED TO BE ADVOCATING,
WOULD NEVER BE TOLERATED WHILE IP IS IN GOVERNMENT. TIMINN
COLUMNIST, MEANWHILE, WAS ANSWERING PREVIOUS DAY'S MORGUN-
BLADID EDITORIAL, ACCUSING IP PAPER OF DOGMATISM THAT SEEMED
TO RULE OUT ANY REVIEW OF DEFENSE RELATIONSHIP AT ANY
TIME, FOR ANY REASON.

MARTIN

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